



Kalispell Public Schools

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SUPERINTENDENT	ASST. SUPERINTENDENT	HUMAN RESOURCES	SPECIAL PROJECTS
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January 23, 2013

Senators,

I am Dan Zorn, the assistant superintendent of the Kalispell Public Schools. I come before you today in support of raising the legal dropout age from 16 to 18. Our district is one of many districts in our state that are a part of the statewide "Graduation Matters Montana" efforts. Our district has invested a great amount of time and resources to create effective dropout prevention strategies. These strategies include expanded remediation, credit retrieval and many academic intervention efforts. We presently are operating two alternative high schools and a "Transition Center" in a partnership with the Flathead County Juvenile Probation Office to meet the needs of our students who struggle to be successful in a traditional high school environment.

Our "Graduation Matters Kalispell" efforts involve a partnership of educators, students, parents, board members, business leaders and our area Chamber of Commerce who are focused upon providing support to our students as they work towards graduation. Much effort is being put into helping our at-risk students graduate from high school and we are seeing promising gains as a result of this effort. Raising the age of mandatory attendance to 18 supports these efforts by sending a legal message to our students, their parents and our community that high school graduation is an essential gateway to success in adulthood. Senate Bill 13 provides this legislature an avenue to join us in our efforts to improve upon our graduation rates by telling our teenagers that school attendance is not an option but an expectation and requirement.

I ask for your support of this bill and greatly appreciate your service to the people of Montana. Thank you and don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Daniel R. Zorn, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent of Schools
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